

Regarding S.B. #184 and H.B. #5262

I am Andrea Leshinskie. I am writing in favor of the above bills, that is, in favor of the state adding the COVID pandemic as an acceptable excuse to request an absentee ballot. Being able to avoid gathering in crowds of people has been shown to reduce the transmission rate of virus, and people who have family who are immune compromised, or cannot receive the vaccine for whatever reason, or simply do not want to increase the transmission rate, should have the option to safely exercise their right to vote and not be forced to put others at risk. I understand that it appears that the COVID pandemic is resolving, but if a new surge occurs near any election time, the government will be scrambling to accommodate the voters. It would seem to be much better to have the protocol in place.

My representative, Mark Anderson, notes that the process of amending the state constitution to change voting rules has already begun, and that he sees no reason to rush it with this legislation. I note that it will still take two or three years to make changes to the state constitution, and I see no reason we should be hobbled between now and then. There will be several elections in that time period. Please move to keep voters as safe and healthy as possible in this interim period.

Thank you for your attention.

Andrea Leshinskie